

SDMS Document ID



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September 14, 2001

TO: DEFTEK TASK GROUP Sent by FAX to attached list  
FROM: BOB HARRINGTON  
SUBJECT: NOTES TO THE FILE *BH*

FYI, here are some recent occurrences.

Last week, (I did not note the date) Mr. [REDACTED] visited my office. I met with him and with Environmental Health Director John Drinnon. [REDACTED] said that since he has moved from his Homa Hills property, his symptoms have subsided. However, when preparing for a hunting trip, he retrieved an electronic item from his travel trailer, and within 30 minutes after bringing that item into his home, he began to experience Nausea. [REDACTED] said that his symptoms improved after he returned the electronic item to the trailer. He said he believes that his trailer and its contents retain some contaminant from the time it was parked at Homa Hills. I told him that the combined information from the multiple agencies' investigations did show trace amounts of teargas chemicals on his property, but that the investigation did NOT confirm a cause and effect link to illness. He said that he believes that DEFTEK is producing some other chemical that has not been disclosed to any of us because it is being produced under the direction of the federal government and under orders for secrecy.

On Wednesday, September 12, I informed the Casper-Natrona County Board of Health about the inconclusive results of the Blood and Urine analyses performed earlier. I said that we had satisfied ourselves that the Homa Hills residents' symptoms could not be linked to TearGas chemicals, and that, although we were not declaring the case closed, we could not justify further expenditures of time and personnel resources unless we received new leads to follow.

On Thursday, September 13, was visited by [REDACTED]. He expressed concern about [REDACTED] physical condition. [REDACTED] said that he had attended a meeting with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] "...at the Federal Building..." (See Below), and that during the meeting, he began to experience a burning and tingling sensation across his forehead. He said that [REDACTED] told him that he [REDACTED] had become re-contaminated after driving his pickup for several hours in cold weather with windows closed. [REDACTED] believes that his pickup retains some contaminant from when it was parked at his Homa Hills property. [REDACTED] said that he [REDACTED] believes that [REDACTED] is carrying that contaminant on or in his clothing or his body, and that it caused [REDACTED] to re-experience the symptoms of facial burning and tingling. [REDACTED] said that he has moved away from his Homa Hills property and that his symptoms had subsided until the meeting with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I summarized the various agencies and activities, and that the positive soil samples confirmed that some chemical had escaped from the DEFTEK property at some time in some concentration, the near-trace presence

Page 2

does NOT confirm a cause and effect linkage to the residents' symptoms. He repeated [REDACTED] speculation that DEFTEK was actually producing some chemical other than teargas that was causing their symptoms. I repeated to him what I had told to the Board of Health: that we remained open-minded to considering new causes, but we would not be taking further direct action at this time.

On Thursday, September 13, I received a telephone call from [REDACTED]. She wanted interpretations of her Urine Thiocyanate analysis. I had John Drinnon join me for corroboration. I said that I would try to answer her questions, but that for an expert opinion she should call the persons listed in the covering letter. She had questions about the "corrected" thiocyanate number; I explained the concept of hydration potentially affecting the concentration of urine-chemistry. She repeatedly interrupted me, asking rhetorical questions (eg., "Well if I'm thirsty and drinking a lot of water all the time, doesn't that prove there's something wrong, huh?") She said that she had taken her granddaughter to a medical specialist in Denver, but she declined to elaborate when I asked for specifics. She said that the illness had spread to BarrNunn, as proven by a parcel of land that has similar dead plants, and that an acquaintance told her had once pastured sheep, but the sheep had died. She said that she was about ready to "just burn everything..." on her property, and demanded that we tell her what toxic chemicals would be released when she does so. Throughout the conversation, I could hear [REDACTED] in the background, making suggestions and comments, but he did not directly participate.

Later that afternoon, Thursday, September 13, I repeated these summary conversations to Ms. Cathy Killean, Natrona County Commissioner and liaison to the Board of Health.

On Friday, September 14, 2001, Mr. [REDACTED] visited my office, and I met with him and John Drinnon. [REDACTED] said that he hoped that we could help him find a way to solve the mystery of the Homa Hills illness before a pending lawsuit is filed in Federal Court in Denver. He said that he had visited the DEFTEK plant last night (September 13), that the rollup door was open, and that he could smell a 'sweet' odor coming through the open door. (He was angry that EPA air monitoring results were not yet available, and noted that EPA had performed near-instant analysis of air at the World Trade Center disaster, therefore they should have done more for his situation. I noted that, in more than 25 years of Environmental Health, this was the fastest and most comprehensive response I have ever encountered from EPA or from any other federal agency.) He said that, shortly after that visit to the DEFTEK plant, he experienced pain in his sacral area. He repeated a theory that he first voiced at the June 26 public meeting; that CS teargas is a 'distractor'...ie, DEFTEK is purposely allowing agencies' to wrongly follow the teargas connection, because DEFTEK is covertly manufacturing some other chemical. He believes that encountering the unknown smell at DEFTEK somehow aggravated an old injury that has left a bone spur. I repeated the summaries noted above, including my belief that, along with the Health Department duty to investigate and mitigate illness, we also have a public duty to expend our publicly funded resources wisely; therefore, in the absence of new leads, we would not be actively pursuing the investigation. He said several times that he was not seeking monetary settlement, and that he believed he could calm down the other residents if we could obtain some sort of

pge 3

admission, apology, and instruction from DEFTEK on mitigating damages. I said that I would speak privately to [REDACTED], and I have made an appointment to do so on Monday, September 17.

I find it interesting that, within two weeks, I have been contacted by 4 different residents, all of whom voiced essentially the same allegation: that DEFTEK is covertly manufacturing some chemical other than teargas. I find it equally interesting that these contacts have occurred very near the time of a reported meeting of the residents' with their attorneys, and that the most recent contact included an overt offer to withdraw their complaints.

END

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**DATE: Sept. 14, 2001**

**TO: DEFTECK TASK GROUP  
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**FAX NUMBER:**

**# OF PAGES, INCLUDING  
THIS COVER PAGE   4**

**MESSAGE:**

**Notes to File**

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